

FINAL



WEARE BOARD OF SELECTMEN
MEETING MINUTES
December 5, 2005

PRESENT: LAURA BUONO CHAIRMAN; LEON METHOT, VICE CHAIRMAN; HELEEN KURK, SELECTMAN; DONNA M. OSBORNE, SELECTMAN; JOSEPH M. FIALA, SELECTMAN

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR: Gregory C. Begin, Interim
RECORDING SECRETARY: Cherry Palmisano

GUESTS: Chuck Metcalf, Naomi Bolton, Chip Meany, Judy Rogers, Evelyn Connor, Tina Pelletier, Donna Meuse, Will Ottery, Don Burke, Matt Esenwine, Jonathon Dowst, Frank Campana, Forrest Esenwine, Ginger Esenwine

6:34 Chairman Laura Buono called the meeting to order.

1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – Mr. Frank Campana commented on receiving his bill and in doing some calculations determined the town tax rate went up 58% before the Selectmen voted to give back \$200,000 to the tax payers. Mr. Campana said with the money being given back it is a 40% increase and feels this is excessive. Mr. Campana said the \$4.51 original dollar amount indicated in the voting for expenses, which was \$2.86 last year is 5% with the money given back and 6% without the money, tax rate includes the school. These numbers are quite disturbing to Mr. Campana. Mr. Campana suggested to the Selectmen to request from the public exactly what they need and feels they have the support of the tax payers. Mr. Campana sat in on the Finance Committee Meeting last month and heard someone say that the Finance Committee was an advocate for the taxpayer but he does not agree. Mr. Campana got a copy of the assessment card for the town with the notes from the assessor on it; it states that sheds under 60 square feet are no longer assessed. He asked Judy Rogers when this took affect she said about 1990 and it came about from a vote of the Selectmen. Mr. Campana said for the past 15 years he has been paying taxes on 2 sheds that were declared null and void back in 1990. Mr. Campana questioned when the Selectmen make a determination of this type the average citizen would not know to go and check their assessment card. Mr. Campana would like to see some kind of mechanism to notify citizens and put the responsibility on them to see what they can do. He would like to see some kind of notification to the public when changes are made.

2. CORRESPONDENCE – Email from Gene Propper with regards to rocks on Abijah Bridge. The Selectmen decided to have the rocks removed and Chief Begin will advise Carl Knapp.

The Board discussed donations being made on behalf of the town to the families of Mike Pelletier and Bruce Benzel who were active volunteers in town. Vice Chairman Methot said he was unsure we can use taxpayer's money to donate to the families. Selectman Kurk said there will be a memorial sign at the dog officer station for Bruce Benzel. Chairman Buono said with that in mind are we using taxpayer's money. Chief Begin said they hope to get a donation for the sign.

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Chief Begin received a phone call from Cutting Blade regarding cisterns money. The Board discussed paying the money to Cutting Blade. Chairman Buono said as long as the Board is in favor then Chief Richards and Chief Begin can get together and decide.

Chairman Buono received a letter from the Department of Safety, thanking Chief Begin for his involvement as a mentor with the DARE NH and DARE America programs.

Selectman Kurk got report from the Code of Ethics Committee and would like to have the Board members review the report and go over it with the committee on the December 19, 2005.

Selectman Kurk asked about the status of the windows and asked about the maintenance on the furnace. Chief Begin thinks the furnace maintenance was already performed and will check into the window status.

Selectman Kurk discussed BSMI and researching a new software company, it was discussed about paying the contract quarterly to leave room to research new software. Selectman Kurk is concerned they will be getting cut off and also concerned with paying for a service we will not receive.

Selectman Kurk told the Board someone questioned her about the policy and procedure regarding private parties repairing a Class VI road and the town's liability. Selectman Kurk contacted Susan Slack from Local Government Center and would like to discuss this further after Vice Chairman Methot reads the documentation. It was discussed there was a citizen who would like to put up a storage unit, not a dwelling, on a Class VI road which was denied by Chip Meany. The individual would like to come before the BOS. The Board discussed contacting Brian Drescher on the matter.

3. DEPARTMENT HEADS – Evelyn Connor updated the Board on the status of the office, stating everything was running smoothly, Diane Lamb was working out great and revenue has been up every month. Ms. Connor told the Board passports have been making them good money. In 2007 you will need to have a passport to go into Canada. Ms. Connor informed the Board she went to the New England Convention to be able to issue passports and no one else in the area can issue passports, which is a great asset for the town. Ms. Connor said the dog officer has done an incredible job, dogs have been getting picked up and fees are being paid. Ms. Connor posted the positions open for next year for elections in March, candidates start date to file is January 26, 2006 and close date is February 3, 2006. Petitioned Warrant Articles have to be in by January 7, 2006. Deliberative Session is scheduled for February 4, 2006.

4. TOWN CLERK – Ms. Connor said they will be online by February and they will be able to register more vehicles than in the past. Ms. Connor told the Board she has been having computer problems and is asking for a third computer, equipment to go online, flat screen monitors, and a validator machine for checks. Ms. Connor said it is going to cost the town money but this will give her an accurate record of the revenue from dog licenses and vehicle registrations. The bottom line of the budget is \$267,038 for 2006. Ms. Connor said Maureen Billodeau will be totally under the Town Clerk's budget which will decrease the Tax Collector's Budget. Ms. Connor is concerned with going online and all the extra work they will have, she really needs to have Ms. Billodeau full-time and Ms. Lamb part-time. Ms. Connor stated the need to have all 3 computers with the same programs. Chairman Buono asked for the revenue total as of now. Ms. Connor said they are at \$1,429,381.48 as of November 30. Ms. Connor feels Ms. Billodeau should be made a Deputy Town Clerk. Selectman Fiala is wondering about the ramifications for the Town Clerk having BSMI and the Tax Collector using other software. Chairman Buono said the software they are looking for in Finance is separate from the Tax Collector. Ms. Connor feels going online would benefit the town and increase revenue but will also increase the workload. Selectman Kurk is concerned with the increase in all the budgets overall. Chairman Buono asked for 2004

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Revenue. Ms. Connor said 2004 total revenue was \$1,467,000.00. Chairman Buono asked if there is anything in the Capital Reserve to purchase the computer equipment. Selectman Kurk said there is approximately \$10,000 in the computer systems fund. The total request for the Town Clerk 2006 budget is \$122,267.38. Ms. Connor stated all plates that they used to send to the state for registrations will soon be able to be done in the office.

5. LAND USE – Naomi Bolton questioned pay increases being included in the budget. Chairman Buono would like to see the budgets come in level with the wage increases separate and should be uniform for all departments. Discussion of Health Insurance increase being 19.8%. Mrs. Bolton said the bottom line is \$66,194 which is an increase of 0.67% of Land Use Budget. Matt Esenwine said having the revenue sheet early on is very helpful to the Finance Department. Selectman Fiala questioned postage and asked whether the line should be increased, it was discussed that this line is an offset due to revenue.

6. CODE ENFORCEMENT – Chip Meany presented 3 different budgets to the Board. Budget 1 has no wages included. Budget 2 calls for a 3.6% wage increase for Mr. Meany and Tina Laramée. Budget 3 requests a full time secretary full time with a 33.5% increase in the existing budget. Mr. Meany said last year they were 17.1% over on the revenue. Mr. Meany said the budget does not reflect any changes in the health insurance. Finance Committee asked if increasing the Secretary's hours would increase the revenue. Mr. Meany answered it would not. Matt Esenwine asked Mr. Meany a question to consider, if you do get the warrant article for a vehicle and the taxpayers vote for it could you get the vehicle maintenance line down. Mr. Meany said definitely. Selectman Kurk asked if the vehicle insurance would go up. Mr. Meany said no. Selectman Fiala said he will not be in favor of a budget that does not have a wage increase in it for Mr. Meany.

7. ASSESSING – Judy Rogers stated her budget will be exactly the same. Chairman Buono said she has had a problem with the amount of money spent by the town and we do not receive full time Assessor coverage. Mrs. Rogers feels after the reevaluation we would not need a full time assessor. The options of having a part time assessor verse a contract with Avitar were discussed. Chairman Buono mentioned Mrs. Rogers did a lot of the work to help keep the cost down. Jon Dowst asked Mrs. Rogers if she was in favor of Avitar. Mrs. Rogers stated they do a great job. Chairman Buono stated she has nothing against Avitar but she feels the town's money could be better spent. Mr. Forrest Esenwine said based on the Avitar number, would a full time assessor, vehicle, and needed supplies would the quality of work be compatible. Mr. Esenwine is concerned with the quality of work we would get if we hired someone privately. Chairman Buono said the employee would have to be certified. Mrs. Rogers said you cannot change assessors mid stream during the reevaluation because there is more involved than just the assessing. The Board all agreed to put the discussion of researching the assessing and making a decision on what is best for the town on a future agenda.

8. TAX COLLECTOR – Tina Pelletier her salary does not include evaluation increase. Ms. Pelletier would like to keep money in her budget in case she needs employment help. Health insurance does not include new rate increase. Ms. Pelletier said on the Title Deed Search line she does receive revenue on this line. Ms. Pelletier informed the Board of the need of a new postal meter. The Board discussed the purchase of a new postal meter will come out of the Selectmen's Office budget. Ms. Pelletier said approximately \$750,000 of tax money has come in.

9. HEALTH OFFICER – Donna Meuse stated there was no increase in the Health Officer Budget. Ms. Meuse told the Board some issues take months to complete; she has done several inspections along with paperwork. Last year she gave herself a \$100 increase. Vice Chairman Methot asked if daycare centers or licensed in home daycares are required to pay a fee for their inspection. Ms. Meuse said they are not.

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10. WELFARE – Ms. Meuse told the Board the St. Joseph's line has gone up because it includes Meals on Wheels which we subsidize. The Meals on Wheels will cost \$450 and she feels this is beneficial not only because of the food but the visit and check in on the elderly. Ms. Meuse told the Board Riverbend does serve 25 families in Weare and we need to compensate them. The Red Cross asks for the same amount of money every year and helps with homeless and does blood drives. Ms. Meuse told the Board the flu shot clinic date kept changing and the services they were supposed to receive were never performed for 2 consecutive years. Chairman Buono questioned Ms. Meuse about the Health and Safety Fair and if it was cancelled just because of the flu shot. Ms. Meuse said the Health and Safety Fair always coincides with the flu shot. Ms. Meuse said for the first time as being the Welfare Officer she is over her budget because of rents. State laws say if someone qualifies and they meet the qualifications she has to help them. Ms. Meuse was asked how many hours a week she puts in, she said at least 20 hours a week. Mr. Esenwine commented to the Board about the VNA and justifying the expense. Ms. Meuse was asked if she refers people to Riverbend. Ms. Meuse said she suggests they call Riverbend. Ms. Meuse said some of the needs of the community poor are taken care of by the Weare Food Pantry which is manned by volunteers and filled by donations.

11. CABLE – Will Ottery told the Board the cable budget has increased 54%. They are working on bids to get some equipment and are upgrading the cable station. The budget this year reflects the new equipment needed to update the cable channel. Mr. Ottery said they currently have no equipment to allow them to re-run the programs. Mr. Ottery said they would like to update the cable channel to better serve the community and have a workable community access channel. Selectman Kurk asked Mr. Ottery if he will be requesting money from the cable company. He said it has been discussed.

12. PARKS AND RECREATION – Mr. Chuck Metcalf told the Board the hourly wage line is hard to predict due to weather. Mr. Metcalf said the part time Director is currently paid hourly but there has been discussion to make it a stipend position. Lawn care is currently in 4 different budgets and Mr. Metcalf is unsure how this should be handled. The Board discussed there is one contractor taking care of all separate contracts. Chairman Buono feels the lawn care budget line should be under Town Building and Grounds. Vice Chairman Methot suggested bringing in the lawn care contractor to have him breakdown the bid price. Mr. Esenwine questioned the Recreation Activities line. Mr. Metcalf stated this year the Chamber of Commerce paid for the summer concerts at the gazebo but he is unsure if they will do so next year. Mr. Metcalf stated they might have some funds left in their budget and there are some purchases they would like to make with the Selectmen's approval. Mr. Metcalf said the Pools & Beach Insurance is an uncontrollable line item.

13. CEMETRY – Mr. Don Burke complimented the lawn care contract stating Cutting Blade has done an excellent job. Mr. Burke informed the Board Pine Grove Cemetery is in need of a fence. Mr. Burke stated they have some flooding issues at 2 cemeteries. Mr. Dowst stated the CIP is in support of the needs of the cemeteries. Mr. Burke told the Board there has been some pig damage and vandalism at some of the cemeteries.

Chairman Buono moved, Selectmen Kurk seconded to approve the minutes from October 3, 2005 and October 17, 2005 as amended. Passed 5-0-0.

14. MANIFESTS

Chairman Buono moved, Selectman Kurk seconded, to authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign Manifest and order the Treasurer to sign checks dated December 8, 2005. Passed 5-0-0.

Accounts Payable	\$310,608.96
Forest Fire Payroll	\$97.59
Gross Payrolls	<u>\$27,844.07</u>
Total	\$338,550.62

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To authorize the Board of Selectmen to sign manifests and order the Treasurer to sign checks dated December 14, 2005.

Accounts Payable	\$794,793.00
Gross Payrolls	\$ <u> </u>
Total	\$794,793.00

Vice Chairman Methot moved, Chairman Buono seconded to authorize a spending freeze until March 2006. Passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chairman Methot moved, Chairman Buono seconded to amend the end of the spending freeze to December 31, 2005. Passed 5-0-0.

Vice Chairman Methot mentioned he did not hear back from Mason & Rich regarding questions on their audit.

15. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Chief Begin informed the Board Mr. Bohlin requested correspondence between Selectmen and cable equipment bidders.

Vice Chairman Methot moved, Chairman Buono seconded to adjourn at 10:28 p.m.

16. ADJOURNMENT

A True Record.

Cherry Palmisano, Recording Secretary